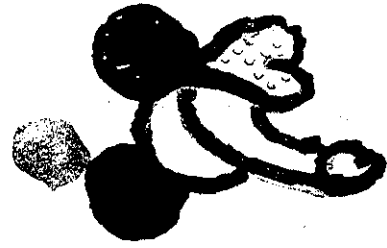


# Penny Arcade



on:

• Feda Gomeeda

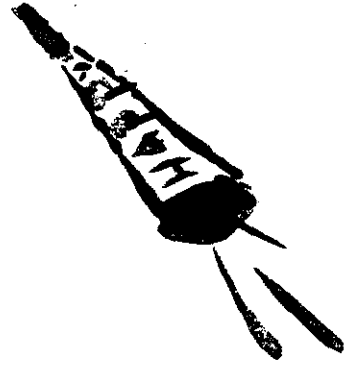
• RUTHIE THE DUCK  
LADY

• Quentin Crisp

• Truth

• Herself

• More...





Eeda gomeeda the last time that i seen her

She sure looked funky to me

Her pussy was shaved , she was wrapped up in bandaids

she thought she was dressed for glory!

-From *Eeda Gomeeda*

"while you were out" was completely unscripted and improvised each night. There was no rehearsal. It was completely developed in front of a live audience. I had a five piece band at the time and we did one music rehearsal.

the idea being to create a sound score live such as films have. It was a goal which i rarely achieved but the moments when it worked were amazing. The characters i did were all real people that i had known. A formenteran goat lady from the Balearic island where I had lived in the 70's, Ruthie the duck lady, a street character from New Orleans, Andrea Whips, a Warhol superstar who killed herself in 1972, dame Margot Howard-Howard, the drag queen who convinced New York society, or at least the New York social press that she was part of the English royal family. The show was fast, disjointed, fragmented like real life. It was performed at performance space 122 in New York. It had 4 performances. Afterwards, in rebellion towards an art scene that couldn't conceive of more than a one night stand for most artists, i rented a space on avenue a and ran that show for four months completely on word of mouth, no New York press would review me and i began my long relationship directly with the general public, my favorite part of humanity.

It's a small world  
But not if you have  
To clean it!

*Hope is a killer!*  
*-one line poem*

### Axiom

- 1 While Art can be product, product can never be art.
- 2 The distance between a high priestess and a sacred cow is really short.
- 3 No artist sells out, the industry and the media buy in.
- 4 Love someone, and let someone love you back. It's the most political act you can make.
- 5 Barbie is a slut.**
- 6 Erotic dancing is the most powerful feminist art form. It is the only thing designed by women that controls me unlike the myriad of things designed by men to control women.
- 7 Life is simple. We either coming from love or we are coming from fear.
- 8 Faghags are like certain Christians who hid Jews during the Holacaust.
- 10 In order to be successful, !2 people have to think they can make a buck off you .It is never one person.
9. "The world is horrible place filled with horrible people so when you meet a beautiful person you have to, in the words of Shakespeare, " bind them to you with hoops of steel"

## ANDREA WHIPS

It's show time darling! And everything is coming up roses! Is everybody happy? I'm a real Warhol superstar darling! I'm a real woman! I'm gonna be on top tonight! Andy Warhol was my husband! Lou reed was my wife! And you are all my beautiful children. You're beautiful because you understand how beautiful the world is, how beautiful I am and I told the world, "you're not paying Andrea whips because she's beautiful but because the world is beautiful and the world must pay! You may not realize who I am. This generation is the slow group. Sesame street caused brain damage! MTV makes the brain cells stick together! Have you seen the downtown scene lately? Who are those young Republicans with tattoos and multiple piercing? You know, the ones who keep telling us how fab everything is. Couldn't they afford a longer adjective? You know like fabulous? It's like the made for TV movie of the 60's and it isn't even in living color! Thank god I'm an acid freak! Thank god I'm a country girl! I'm a real acid freak darling, I've got some very freaky things in my bag! I'm a real blonde darling! Look at these grapefruits! Yesterday I ran through the whole foods whispering, "who will fill me full of jelly, custard and cream? People ran out shrieking! When I shriek in public people take notice darling! I'm a first, I'm a second, I'm a ding dong baby and I'm on my way up there! Up there with James dean and Marilyn Monroe! Marilyn's been dead so many years, you better love me while you can! Yesterday I rode down in my elevator 108 times to make sure that the doorman was staying awake for the other tenants. He called me a stupid cunt! But I told him darling, "A cunt is a useful thing!"

I just had a vicious acid flashback! I was completely surrounded by colored fish and I just knew that nobody would believe me! So I brought them back! Look at these fabulous colors! Don't worry! This is not performance art. Performance art is the vinyl miniskirt of the 80's darling!

I'm going to throw an I Ching for all of you! You look like you could use it. See! A circle of psychedelic fish! That's very, very good. And three red fish in a row! That's very auspicious darling. And a changing fish! If you were real homosexuals you would know that this color was chartreuse! Have you noticed how they keep maligning homosexuals? Why? Homosexuals are so fabulous and they give flawless dinner parties, it's homosexuals like me they should worry about. The ones who roam the streets. Not the homosexuals who stay home!

Look at your social ecology! It's like the sinking of Atlantis! I myself come from a long line that doesn't have many people left standing in it. 20 years from now people will be standing around at cocktail parties saying, "I remember when there were faggots, queens and dykes and it was fabulous!"

Sometimes less is more but darling a lot of times less is less.

No Mona Lisa  
I am magnum mouthed  
Honey snatched  
My flavor changes constantly  
No Mona Lisa  
I stroll like a sailor  
Bullets pass through me and I keep moving  
No Mona Lisa  
No sidelong glance  
Supposition, preposition, have no place in my  
communication  
When I talk, you know exactly what I mean  
Mona Lisa has no mouth  
no cunt  
She stops at the waist  
I hate that bitch  
No Mona Lisa  
I don't discount, price down or go on sale.  
No auction.

No Mona Lisa  
I don't hang around  
But if I have it for you  
You are lucky  
You can take it to the track  
You can take it to the bank  
You can deposit it  
No Mona Lisa  
I am no collectors item  
No curators pet  
No Mona Lisa  
I cannot be catalogued or disertated  
I cannot be viewed from a different angle  
I cannot be seen in a different light  
No Mona Lisa  
I read the writing on the wall behind me!  
No Mona Lisa  
No side long manipulation

I never had a father.  
I never learned how to be that kind of whore  
You need a daddy  
To practice  
that kind of stalking  
You need a daddy  
I never apprenticed to my mother  
I wasn't well for that center of attention and  
protection  
I was nobody's angel, nobody's princess,  
nobody's baby  
No Mona Lisa  
I grew wild  
uncultivated  
ungroomed  
unprotected  
and unpromoted to a position of power  
I know what you want  
when you want it  
how you want it

I deliver without a sermon

My religion has no pope

no choir

no hope

I am a loner

You are lucky

No Mona Lisa

I never learned how to simmer contentedly

I boil over continuously

Hot sweet syrup between my legs

Tot sweet syrup between my legs

When I'm in love

I stay wet all the time.

When I'm in love

When I'm in love

I stay wet all the time.

I,I,I,I,I

I stay wet all the time.

I stay wet all the time.

Mona Lisa has no mouth

No cunt

She stops at the waist.

Mona Lisa sits

I stand

Two lightening bolts in my fists

A crescent moon over my cunt

No Mona Lisa

I don't need special lights, special glass

or a smoke free environment

I am 3D

You can touch me.

I touch back

Talk back

Spit back

Bite back

No Mona Lisa

No cryptic stare

No Gioconda smile

No Mona Lisa

I am a loner

I tell you the truth

I am ruthless.

You are lucky.



#### On the Occasion of Quentin Crisp's Centennial

Surely few have lived as unique a life as Quentin Crisp, nor as isolated. Quentin often compared himself to Joseph Carey Merrick, The Elephant Man. Merrick, who except for a brief turn in the rude side shows that were outlawed during his short life, was unemployable for most of his life because of his grotesque appearance. After years of public abuse due to the extreme deformity of his head, Merrick became a celebrity to the Victorian upper class and a favorite of Queen Victoria herself. Merrick died At age 27, only 18 years before Quentin's birth in 1908. In the oral culture of Edwardian England, before radio or television, Quentin would have known Merrick's life and with so few to compare his lot in life to, I can understand, why the young Denis Pratt, who later changed his name to Quentin Crisp, would have identified with the limitations his own much more benign but still provocative appearance brought him.

Meeting Quentin in 1981 when he was 73 years of age and knowing him until his death a few weeks short of his 91st birthday, I saw no reason why he couldn't live to 100. He had a robustness of spirit one generally finds in Mediterranean goat herders. The long days of solitude that stretch into years, give an agility to body and mind and a twinkle in the eye, if the person is not driven half mad from human isolation. Quentin was not mad at all. Madness was a quality, which despite his eccentricity, was not part of his emotional or mental palette, although most who saw him in his early years of hennaed hair, rouged lips, and what was considered inappropriately flamboyant dress, would have found that hard to believe. In the early 70's, long before I met Quentin, I had known many goat herders when I lived on the island of Formentera, in Spain's Balearic Islands. That was before that lonely, ancient and rugged island became the playground for weekend Euro trash. In those days, Formentera was what it had been since eternity, a rock with Almond and Fig trees, Century Plants and few Pines, where an ancient people eked out a subsistence, living in the face of harsh nature. Island people like mountain people have a fierce individuality, honed and bolstered by their isolation. Among this isolated people, every family had it's designated goat herder, who from childhood spent years, in fact, their entire life in near total solitude. From dawn to dusk, they herded goats from one patch of scrub to another, rarely engaging in conversation with other human beings outside of an hour at a meager dinner in front of a kerosene lamp before falling into bed only to start the cycle before dawn the next day. Some of these herders, both men and women, were numbed into an animal like quietude but a few blazed with an intense individuality, honed by those long hours and long years spent alone. I



recognized this very important element in Quentin from the first and he was quite pleased and comforted, if somewhat surprised by my innate understanding of this central reality of his life.

In 1988, in response to a remark made to me by columnist Michael Musto, that I was the only person he had ever heard Quentin have a real conversation with, Quentin replied:

"Most people are never with me. They are in my presence."

"Most people never talk to me." He continued, "They interview me."

Hiding in plain sight for most of his adult life, Quentin Crisp was a figure of public if anonymous, derision and speculation from his 20's well into his 60's when through the sheer power of his individuality, he tore through the veil of anonymity to public recognition.

In 1963, on the airwaves of British radio, he made his first contact with the general public, which began what he called his "path into the heart of humanity." That modest radio interview with Philip O'Connor led to the 1968 publication of his autobiography, *The Naked Civil Servant*, a book that sold poorly and made no impact. Then in 1975, with actor John Hurt as his "familiar", he burst in on a largely unsuspecting British public, where they were at their most vulnerable, in their sitting rooms, in their bathrobes having tea.

The airing of that television film, based on his autobiography of the same title, directed by Jack Gold with screenplay by Philip Mackie, captured the complexity, wit and dignity with which Quentin Crisp traversed his life, and brought the discussion of homosexuality into public discourse in living rooms across Great Britain. Modestly demurring, that it was this presentation of his life that had brought about a change in the public opinion about homosexuality in Britain, Quentin would only give credit to Jack Gold, Philip Mackie and John Hurt. When pressed he would say,

"Well, there were only two channels on British TV at that time so while they were making tea that night someone asked "Well what's on telly?" and the reply came back,

"The news in on" "Well check the other channel", "Well, there is a homo talking about his life" "Well, then, lets watch the homo."

In 1996 Quentin called me to ask for a dispensation from having to live to the age of 100, and instead be let off the hook at 90. He had publicly promised me to live to be 100 years old many times. I begged him to reconsider, reminding him of his promises. "You bullied me." he replied. "I said it to please you. You were being selfish" Certainly I was selfish, I overlooked his long list of ailments, much as he did, including the kind of ennui that comes as one nears 90, to all but the very few. I could not imagine the world without Quentin in it and when I told him so, remarking that 90 was a mere two years away he answered dryly,

"I think I can eak it out."

Ten days before he died in 1999, I commented that he might in fact die in Manchester, as a way of talking him out of going on that tortuous trip, and with his amused laughter egging me on, I built on the premise that he might actually die on the plane, causing his producer to not only lose the cost of bringing him to England but also depriving him of the income from Quentin's appearances. Quentin had a trickster's heart and an innate orneriness. He loved the idea of the producer, who had been making a pretty penny off him and under paying him getting short shrift. Quentin laughed heartily, ,

"That would be marvelous".

However nothing would change the fact that he was set on dying as soon as possible. When I would chastise him for not taking his heart medicine he would only reply

"But taking my heart medicine is inconsistent with my desire to die."

Later in the conversation on the day he left for Britain, I wailed into the phone

"But what will I do when you die?"

A moment passed in silence and he replied,

"It is very simple Miss Arcade" he pattered on, seemingly unfazed by my sorrow, "I am going. You are staying. I feel sorry for you."

An Edwardian dandy, he never completely lost the traces of the middle class that could not contain him no more than he could tolerate its strictures.

Quentin Crisp saw most of a century with clear and open eyes from his birdseat at the edge of society.

In 1995 I brought Quentin to meet Charles Henri Ford, the American Surrealist poet, born the year after him in 1909. We met for tea in Ford's attic rooms in The Dakota, the gothic apartment house at West 72nd St and Central Park West. They hated each other instantly in the most polite way possible. It was like Joan Crawford and Bette Davis in the beginning scenes of "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane" A favorite film of Quentin's that he suggested would make an excellent vehicle for the two of us a few weeks before he died.

Charles, ever the rakish, boyish figure, who had ruled many worlds with only his talent and good looks, pronounced Quentin "A Fuddy Duddy" and "an old maid." Quentin for his part turned up his nose at Charles's blasé spirit, calling him "Shallow, superficial and thoughtless" Yet it was just this superficiality that Ford and the coterie of modernists who flocked to Paris in the 20's and 30's were keen on developing. This was the original concept of modernism in the late 20's that eschewed deep feeling and ideas as such. When I admitted I could not understand Gertrude Stein's writing, Charles struck out at me, clearly exasperated "Why do you need to understand? There is nothing to understand. It is the purity of language itself. Why do you need meaning? It is all on the surface." This idea of "surface", was something Ford passed on to Andy Warhol, who despite his self absorption, was a keen student of art history with a tremendous admiration of artistic lineage. Ford mentored Warhol for many years, acting as a living link between the 30's and the 60's. Quentin and Charles studiously ignored each other through out the entire afternoon with impeccable manners on both their parts. Quentin, who had suffered ignominy for a great deal of his life, was disgruntled by Ford's blasé, breezy self-confidence, the mark of one who had it easy all his life. Ford was clearly frightened by Quentin's blatant embrace of old age, feeling Quentin had succumbed to old age, Ford's greatest enemy, and one to be fought to the death. Quentin embraced old age, and the wisdom it bestows. Yet Ford was wrong about Quentin succumbing to growing old. Both Charles and Quentin shared the true essence of youth which is an attribute that has nothing to do with age. Each approached everything that crossed their paths with the curiosity of 20 year olds yet each misread the other. Ford recoiled at Quentin's slightly moth eaten Edwardian dandiness, while Quentin was disdainful of Charles's faded blue jeans and latent hippie glamour. They were an anathema to one another, looking as though thru a fun house mirror at each other's shadow sides, high priests of the same cult of individuality. Quentin viewed each period of his life as a stepping stone to self-awareness, something Ford assiduously avoided to the day he died. A few days before Ford's death at 92, as I sat at his bedside, as Charles tapped his fingers together, cackling and sing songing,

"Lucky! Lucky! Lucky! You can't say I haven't been lucky"

gleefully and acutely aware that he had escaped much of the sorrow that life can bring. Quentin on the other hand had suffered deeply though stoically through out his life and had no room at all for people who could neither acknowledge or accept the lumps and bumps that life brings to oneself or others.

In 1999, on September 26th, a few weeks before Quentin died, he and I did a final performance together at the Knitting Factory in New York City; our last performance together fell oddly on the anniversary of our first public performance on the same date in 1992. Before an admiring crowd, I asked Quentin to comment on aging and he replied,

"When you are in your 80's your body just starts to hang on you."

I adored stating openly that Quentin would die soon as the resulting shock and annoyance towards me from other people delighted Quentin so much.

"They are very angry with me Quentin because I said that you are very old and soon you will die"

"But why should that annoy them?"

he would ask, turning right and left in his chair and scanning the audience,

"It is true."

"Because they spend hours at the gym, Quentin, and they think that they will never grow old and that they will never die."

In the hush that followed, Quentin would pull himself up in his chair, make eye contact around the room and say disdainfully,

"I see. How foolish they are."

Just as The Elephant Man, whose mind was fully functional, but whose appearance greatly limited his options in life, Quentin was bowed by this circumstance until late in life when the tides of time turned and Quentin was able to fully embrace the societal freedom that had long eluded him.

"Not to worry Miss Arcade," Quentin cautioned me time and time again, when my motives and point of view were misinterpreted by the world around me,

"Time is kind to the non-conformist."

I think few of us are able to understand what it meant to a man shunned by society for most of his life to be able to walk without drawing a crowd of gawkers or worse, and to be able to freely converse with those he met along his path. If it were not for his health I think Quentin would have stayed on to reach his centennial, as there was nothing wrong with his mind. Quentin was not a sensualist, he ate heartily when he was hungry, and nothing when he was not, and largely ignored the needs of his body. He bathed like a cat, only when necessary and despite his body crying in pain, he did little to alleviate his physical discomforts, from ingrown toenails, to hernias, and later prostate cancer and congestive heart failure. Quentin lived in his mind and he lived for the pursuits of the mind. There was no better companion of any age than Quentin when it came to reading a scene, an event or an individual. He was quick, direct and honest as long as it was not in public and would cause none discomfort. Quentin was intellectually perverse. A contrary like certain American Indians who live their lives doing everything backwards. A natural provocateur, he enjoyed getting everyone in a lather and then benignly looking around in mock surprise at the results. I believe the rejection and isolation that his appearance caused him in the early part of his life, coupled with the fact that it doomed him in many ways to a very narrow and intellectually stifling and ultimately unfulfilling milieu, he never fully recovered from those insults which came not only from the straight society of his day but also from the closeted gay one. It spurred his desire to be at the center of humanity and not restricted to a gay ghetto. I think he would have been shocked, truly shocked by 9/11 because he was America's greatest supporter. He was a true believer in the American Way. This curious adulation was one of the very few things he was naive about and it was at the center of many quarrels between us. While he hated grandiosity in people he adored it in America, which was like a person to him, not just a country. From his vantage point of long years of observation from the sidelines of life, he was largely an unerring reader of the mores and foibles of humanity and society at large yet he saw America as a 'a good parent, trying to stem the quarrels of unruly children around the world. He died just before the world changed for good but he had seen it coming, the loss of a way of life that had been filled with structure, both good and bad. I wonder what he would have made of Enron and the Iraq War, and the fall of the dollar. I think the chaos would have been unbearable for him, while he had suffered much, beneath his acceptance and humaneness, he had never forgiven a second of it, the chaos that he saw coming in society, once finalized and made concrete would have made him sad and as someone who had no room for sorrow in life, even his own, I believe it would have been untenable for him. Like most of us, Quentin didn't have a fallback position regarding the end of western civilization.

Quentin hated the encroaching gentrification of his neighborhood in 1999 and what it has become now would have infuriated him and he had spent long years removing fury from his emotional menu. Part of his glee in life was to accept the horror of every day life but nothing would have prepared him for the real death

knell of society. He adored that there was greed, and injustice and corruption in both people and in the world but he liked a cozy kind of greed, injustice and corruption. The kind that exists in fairy tales and dime store novels. I believe that the ogre of modern free market capitalism, with it's outsourcing, homogenization and flagrant thievery at the highest levels of commerce and the government would have shocked him into a position he had spent his life escaping. Caring. Caring would have been a terrible position for Quentin who believed as humans we deserve nothing. Quentin believed neither in charity nor kindness for kindness sake except for the most surface kind of polite societal courtesy. It was this detachment that made him accept everyone and everything that came into his life equally. He for the most part suspended judgment yet. In a strange way he held on to the middle class mores that he was raised with. His life was one boundaried by limited expectations of what people or the world could offer him and with a mind as great as his, his own understanding of the strictures placed on his development by society left him little sympathy for the strictures of others. He offered instead his own life as a kind of path that leads to what he considered the most valuable treasure of all, personal authenticity.



I WAS BORN IN 1950 THE MOST MODERN POINT IN HISTORY UP TO THAT MOMENT TO BE BORN.

I WAS 5 IN 1955 THE MOST PROGRESSIVE TIME TO BE IN KINDERGARDEN.

I WAS 12 IN 1962 THE YEAR MARILYN MONROE DIED. THAT AFTERNOON AT EASTEND PARK I TOOK MY BATHING SUIT OFF UNDER THE WATER AND PRETENDED THE CHLORINE WAS CHAMPAIGNE.

I WAS 13 IN 1963 THE YEAR PRESIDENT KENNEDY WAS ASSASINATED. WHEN THEY ANNOUNCED IT IN SCIENCE CLASS I DIDN'T FEEL ANYTHING BUT LATER THAT DAY WHEN THEY CANCELLED THE CYO DANCE- I GOT REALLY MAD.

I WAS 16 IN 1966. THE YEAR OF THE YOUTHQUAKE. ANYBODY WHO IS ANYBODY IS A TEENAGER- ASK DIANA VREELAND

I WAS 17 IN 1967. THE SUMMER OF LOVE. PROVINCETOWN. ALL THE GAY MEN THOUGHT I WAS A SEX CHANGE. NYC AND THE LOWER EASTSIDE, THE DRUG SCENE, MILLBROOK AND TIMOTHY LEARY, YIPPIES AND POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS, WHITEHALL STREET

WITH ALLEN GINSBERG, I JOIN THE PLAYHOUSE OF THE RIDICULOUS AND IT'S 30 PEOPLE ON STAGE AT ALL TIMES, IT'S POLITICAL, ROCK AND ROLL THEATER WITH GREASEPAINT AND GLITTER AND SEQUINS AND LOTS OF DRAG.

I WAS 18 IN 1968. I DANCE AT THE STONEWALL BAR EVERY NIGHT THAT I'M NOT AT MAX'S KANSAS CITY. I ZIP JACKIE CURTIS INTO A DRESS AND DRAG IS CHANGED FOREVER. DEMONSTRATIONS IN NYC AND

AT THE PENTAGON. I JOIN CRAZIES, THE RADICAL ARM OF YIPPIES FOR ABBIE HOFFMAN. ROBIN MORGAN FORMS WITCH IN THE STOREFRONT NEXT TO CRAZIES AND THE RADICAL WOMENS MOVEMENT STARTS WITH THE ACTION AT THE MISS AMERICA PAGEANT.

I WAS 19 IN 1969 AND ANDY WARHOL WANTS ME TO WORK WITH HIM. JACKIE CURTIS, CANDY DARLING, HOLLY WOODLAWN. BABA RAM DASS AND THE SPIRITUAL LIBERATION FRONT. ROCK AND ROLL WITH JIMI HENDRIX, IGGY POP, MC5, JANIS JOPLIN, RIOTS IN THE EAST VILLAGE, MOVIES WITH WARHOL, PLAYS WITH THE RIDICULOUS, RIOT AT THE STONEWALL BAR, THE GAY LIBERATION FRONT FORMS.

I WAS 20 IN 1970. EVERYBODY SAYS THEIR RELIEVED I'M NOT A TEENAGER ANYMORE. MORE WARHOL, MORE THEATER MORE ROCK AND ROLL. SALVADOR DALI, JEFFERSON AIRPLANE, LARRY RIVERS, ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE, PATTI SMITH, THE POETRY PROJECT. MISS CHRISTINE OF THE GTO'S, ROGER VADIM AND JANE FONDA, GERMAIN GREER AND SEARGENT SHRIVER ALL AT MAX'S.

TIMOTHY LEARY RETURNS FROM ALGERIA AND AT MAX'S KANSAS CITY HE TELLS ME TO MOVE TO CALIFORNIA SO I CAN VOTE FOR HIM FOR SENATOR. DOES HE ACTUALLY THINK THE GOVERNMENT IS GOING TO LET HIM? IS EVERYBODY CRAZY?

I WAS 21 IN 1971 ANDY SAYS I'M THE LAST SUPERSTAR. WE FILM 'WOMEN IN REVOLT' AND I SPLIT TO AMSTERDAM WITH THE PLAYHOUSE. WITHIN 6 WEEKS I LEAVE THE PLAYHOUSE TO LIVE WITH THE MOST SOUGHT AFTER MALE HUSTLER IN TOWN. WE OPEN A SHOP TOGETHER SELLING ART DECO AND JUGENSTIEL THAT WE BUY FOR PENNIES EACH MORNING AT THE FLEA MARKET. I CALL DANNY GOLDBERG TO SAY I'M NOT COMING BACK TO NYC AND DANNY ASKS 'BUT WHAT ABOUT YOUR CAREER?' 'WHAT CAREER?', I ANSWER BACK.

I AM 22 IN 1972 I LIVE ON AN OBSCURE ISLAND, FORMENTERA IN SPAIN. ALL MY FRIENDS ARE INTERNATIONAL HASH SMUGGLERS, I DO THEATER, ROCK AND ROLL WITH AN INTERNATIONAL SET OF ARTISTS IN THE SHADOW OF FRANCO AND HIS CENSORS.

I AM 23 IN 1973 I MOVE TO PALMA DE MALLORCA, I TAP DANCE IN THE COBBLESTONE STREETS OF DEYA WITH ROBERT GRAVES WHO'S 78 AND BECOMING SENILE I ASSURE HIM I'M NOT HIS MUSE BUT THE ANTI-MUSE. I SUPPORT A RADICAL THEATER GROUP IN MALLORCA BY DRINKING WITH AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN ANNIE PETITE'S DECADENT AMERICAN SAILOR BAR AT NIGHT.

I AM 24 IN 1974 I TRAVEL MALLORCA WITH PEPE FROM BARCELONA'S PUPPET SHOW DOING POLITICAL THEATER ONE STEP AHEAD OF FRANCO'S HENCHMEN. I ESCAPE AN EVIL PLOT BY THE SPANISH NARCOTICS POLICE TO TURN ME INTO A SPY BY RETURNING TO THE STATES FOR MY SISTERS WEDDING.

I AM 25 IN 1975 AND I MOVE TO THE BACKWOODS OF MAINE WITH AMERICAN-UKRAINIAN ARTIST ONTO A LAND TRUST IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BACK TO THE LAND MOVEMENT POPULATED BY VEGETARIANS,

ORGANIC FARMERS, REFUGEES FROM KENT STATE AND MAINERS WHO ARE

BORN AGAIN, HOMOPHOBES, RACISTS AND SEXISTS. NYC IS BANKRUPT.

DAVID BOWIE HAS BEEN MADE OVER IN THE PLAYHOUSE OF THE RIDICULOUS GLITTER STYLE BY JAIMIE ANDREWS AND TONY ZANNETTA FROM THE PLAYHOUSE AND HE'S A HUGE SUCCESS.

I AM 26 IN 1976 I AM LIVING IN A CABIN IN THE BACKWOODS WITH A WOODSTOVE, NO ELECTRICITY, NO RUNNING WATER WITH A GUN FREAK

HIPPIE SCULPTOR TURNED DEPUTY SHERIFF. THE HIPPIES HATE US AND SO DO THE LOCALS. I'M DOING THEATER WITH A RAG TAG GROUP OF ARTIST FREAKS IN GRANGE HALLS ACROSS THE STATE. I VISIT NYC ONLY TO FIND THAT IT'S STILL DEPRESSED BUT ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE AND PATTI SMITH ARE BECOMING BIG STARS. ROBERT INVITES ME TO LUNCH AND EXPLAINS THE 'SOHO AND THE DOWNTOWN PHENOMENA' TO ME.

I AM 27 IN 1977 I HAVE MY FIRST REAL JOB AS WELFARE DIRECTOR FOR THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD MAINE DEALING WITH 7TH GENERATION WELFARE ROLLS. I CUT THE BUDGET BY TAKING EVERYONE OFF PAMPERS AND PAYING FOR ABORTIONS WITH CITY WELFARE MONEY.

I TAKE OVER A COMMUNITY OWNED THEATER IN PITTSFIELD MAINE.

THE FIRST SHOW I PRODUCE IS CALLED 'NUNS WITH GUNS' A ROCK AND ROLL OPERA WHERE I GET HUNG ON STAGE. I STILL HAVE THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER HEADLINE 'SORRY, SUSANA!'

I AM 28 IN 1978 THE HIPPIE TURNED DEPUTY SHERIFF IS KILLED IN A CANOEING ACCIDENT. THE HIPPIES AND SHERIFF'S AND LOCALS UNITE IN MOURNING HIM BUT I AM THE BLACK WIDOW. I BECOME AN ARTIST ADVOCATE FOR POETS AND MUSICIANS. I CAN'T IMAGINE PERFORMING EVER AGAIN. I THROW MYSELF INTO RUNNING THE THEATRE PRESENTING EVERYTHING FROM ROCK TO POETRY TO BIG BANDS.

I AM 29 IN 1979 I AM ON THE ROAD WITH A ROCK AND ROLL BAND

ROAD MANAGING.WE WORK THE EASTERN SEABOARD. I DANCE THE FIRST THREE SONGS ALONE ON THE DANCE FLOOR. I AM MORE AND MORE OUTRAGEOUS.I GIVE THE AUDIENCE THE PERMISSION TO BE WILD.

I AM 30 IN 1980 ELLEN STEWERT FROM LAMAMA THEATER ASKS ME TO RETURN TO NEW YORK TO DO A PLAY WITH THE PLAYHOUSE OF THE RIDICULOUS FOR LAMAMA'S 20TH ANNIVERSERY 'NITE CLUB ' BY KENNETH BERNARD, WHICH WE HAD DONE IN 1970. MY FRIEND RICHARD URGES ME TO MOVE BACK TO NYC AND DO A SOLO SHOW.

'WHO WILL WRITE IT?', I ASK HIM. 'YOU!', HE REPLY'S. 'ABOUT

WHAT?,'WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU PENNY. WE WANT TO BE WITH YOU. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU TALK ABOUT.'

I AM 31 IN 1981 I AM BACK IN NYC. I AM THROWN OUT OF THE PLAY 'NITE CLUB' THREE DAYS BEFORE IT OPENS.I START WRITING MY OWN WORK FOR HIBISCUS FROM THE ANGELS OF LIGHT AND THE SAN FRANCISCO COCKETTES.ALL MY FRIENDS START DROPPING DEAD

FROM GAY CANCER.GRID.WHATS GOING ON? I START PORTRAYING THE FIRST OF MY REAL LIFE CHARACTERS,ANDREA WHIPS. HIBISCUS DIES THE OBITUARY IN THE VILLAGE VOICE CALLS HIS MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS AIDS.

I AM 32 IN 1982 I PERFORM MY SOLO WORK IN DIVES AROUND THE EAST VILLAGE WITH PHOEBE LEGER, ETHEL EICHELBERGER,JOHN KELLY.JOHN SEX,WENDY WILD IT'S THE EAST VILLAGE OF 'LIQUID SKY'. IT'S THE PYRAMID CLUB, DANCETERIA.AREA,THE SAINT

JACKIE CURTIS GETS 'MARRIED' TO HER 10TH 'HUSBAND' AT CHINESE CHANCE. LEO CASTELLI GIVES HER AWAY AS HE ALWAYS DOES. ANDY IS PART OF THE 'PAPPARAZZI'.

AIDS IS EVERYWHERE. MY FRIENDS. MY AUDIENCES. THE JUNKIES AND STREETWALKERS ON MY BLOCK. IT'S AN EPEDEMIC. THE CHURCHES SAY IT'S GOD'S REVENGE. THE GOVERNMENT IS SILENT.

I AM 33 IN 1983. THE PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIAL ANNOUNCES ON NYC RADIO THAT HE'S OPPOSED TO HANDING OUT CLEAN NEEDLES TO DRUG ADDICTS BECAUSE ANYONE WHO CHOOSES THAT LIFESTYLE DESERVES TO DIE. MEANWHILE AIDS IS SPREADING. GHMC EXPANDS IT'S SERVICES OUTSIDE OF THE GAY MENS COMMUNITY BUT THE TOLL IS OVERWHELMING. ANGER IN THE STREETS. MEANWHILE IT'S THE ART WORLDS FASCINATION WITH GRAFITTI ART,DRAG QUEENS AND THE EAST VILLAGE IS ENGULFED WITH YUPPIES DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN. I WORK WITH CHARLES LUDLAM, JACKIE CURTIS, TAYLOR MEADE AND THE DARK DIVES OF AVE A. ARTISTS START TO QUIETLY DISAPPEAR.

I AM 34 IN 1984 IT'S HAOUI MONTAUGS NO ENTIENDES CABERET

AT DANCETERIA, REAGEN AND BUSH AND NANCY IGNORE THE AIDS CRISIS, ACT UP FORMS TO FIGHT BACK. THE DOWNTOWN PERFORMANCE SCENE EXPANDS WITH EVERY BACKROOM HOSTING. A NEW PERFORMANCE GENDRE EMERGES...THE MEMORIAL.

I AM 35 IN 1985 IT'S 8BC WITH KAREN FINLEY, THE ALIEN COMIC,

ETHEL EICHELBERGER, FRANK MAYA, ERIC BOGOSIAN. JACKIE CURTIS DIES. ANDY DOESN'T GIVE JACKIE THE CAMPBELL'S FUNERAL HOME FUNERAL THAT JACKIE ALWAYS COUNTED ON. LIKE CANDY DARLING'S. WE GIVE JACKIE OUR OWN FUNERAL. COVERING HIM WITH GLITTER TUCKING PACK'S OF KOOL'S INTO THE CASKET. I ARRANGE FOR PETER HUJAR TO PHOTOGRAPH HIM. IT'S PS122 WITH MY FIRST FULL LENGTH SOLO SHOW. AIDS MARCHES ON HALF THE PEOPLE IN MY PHONEBOOK ARE DEAD AND THERES A NEW GENERATION OF DRAG QUEENS AND CLUB KIDS.

I AM 36 IN 1986, 37 IN 1987 39 IN 1989. THE STOCK MARKET CRUMBLES, YUPPIES ABANDON THEIR EAST VILLAGE LOFTS AND THE BMW'S AND LIMOS DISAPPEAR FROM AVENUE A. I DO 'A QUIET NIGHT WITH SID AND NANCY' AT THE CHELSEA HOTEL.

I AM 30 SOMETHING IN 80 SOMETHING. I KNOW MORE DEAD PEOPLE THAN LIVE ONES.

I AM 40 IN 1990. CENSORSHIP SHOWS IT'S FACE, THE ANTI ABORTION MOVEMENT GATHERS SPEED AND I'M WONDERING ABOUT SEPERATION OF CHURCH AND STATE. HELMS ATTACKS MAPPLETHORPE

AND THE ART WORLD CRINGES. HELMS GOES ON THE WAR PATH AGAINST THE NEA AND I DO TOO SUBMITTING 'BITCH! DYKE! FAGHAG! WHORE! AS MY SOLO FELLOWSHIP AUDIT AS KAREN FINELY, HOLLY HUGHS, TIM MILLER AND JOHN FLECK ARE HAVING THEIR NEA GRANTS REVOKED

I AM 41 IN 1991 I CREATE FOUR FULL LENGTH WORKS IN THE 1990-1991 SEASON WITH NO FUNDING THAT RUN FOR 18 WEEKS. I DISCOVER THAT I CAN TOUR MY WORK WITHOUT THE STAMP OF APPROVAL OF THE ART WORLD BECAUSE THE GENERAL PUBLIC NEVER LIKED THE ART WORLD IN THE FIRST PLACE.

I AM 42 IN 1992 WITH BUCHANAN AND THE FUNDEMENTALIST RIGHT ATTACKING BUSH THRU THE NEA I BRING BID!FIW! TO BOSTON AND TAMPA TO SELL OUT AUDIENCES. PS 122 IN NYC SUFFERING FROM A LOSS OF FUNDING ASKS ME TO RUN THE SHOW ALL SUMMER AND I DO TO MORE STANDING ROOM ONLY CROWDS, ART D'LUGOFF FROM THE LEGENDERY VILLAGE GATE SEES THE SHOW WITH RATSO SLOMAN FROM THE NATIONAL LAMPOON AND THEY AGREE THE SHOW MUST GO ON AND WE MOVE IT TO THE VILLAGE GATE WHERE IT RUNS TO DIVERSE AUDIENCES FROM EVERY WALK OF LIFE FROM ALL OVER AMERICA.

MICHELLE FROM THE NATIONAL LESBIAN AND GAY TASK FORCE

COMES TO SEE THE SHOW. 'YOU ARE A LIVING HISTORY OF THE GAY MOVEMENT!', SHE TELLS ME. 'YOU MUST PERFORM THE AIDS-FAGHAG-LOVE PART OF THE SHOW AT THE GALA DURING THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON! SEND ME A VIDEO TAPE SO I CAN SHOW THE REST OF THE



COMMITTEE!' WE SEND ONE BUT THE COMMITTEE REJECTS THE IDEA.THEY DON'T WANT GAYS AND LESBIANS REPRESENTED THIS WAY NATIONALLY.WHICH DOESN'T SURPRISE ME AT ALL. I EXPECTED IT.PEOPLE ON GAY COMMITTEES LOVE TO CALL FORTH THE STONEWALL SPIRIT BUT THEY DIDN'T REALLY LIKE IT IN 1969 AND THEY DON'T LIKE IT NOW. THEY TELL US THERE IS NO ROOM FOR US ON ANY OF THE STAGES FOR THAT WEEKEND.THEY'RE ALL BOOKED. WE GO TO THE MARCH ANYWAY BECAUSE WE BELONG THERE.

I AM 43 IN 1993 AND THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE HAVE SEEN THE SHOW.

I WANT TO CLOSE THE SHOW ON THE YEAR ANNIVERSERY BUT MARIANNE FAITHFULL COMES BACKSTAGE AND INTRODUCES HERSELF WITH A REQUEST 'I LOVE THIS SHOW. I'VE SEEN IT TWICE THIS WEEK. WOULD YOU CONSIDER LETTING ME SING ONE SONG IN THE SHOW?' SO WE DO ONE EXTRA SHOW THE WEEKEND AFTER THE OFFICIAL GALA WHERE I INTEGRATE MARIANNE INTO THE SHOW. THERE ARE LINES AROUND THE BLOCK FOR THE GALA CLOSING AND TEN DAYS LATER WE LEAVE FOR THE BRITISH TOUR. WE SELL OUT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL GARNERING RAVE REVIEWS FROM THE MOST IMPORTANT CRITICS IN BRITAIN. WE SELL OUT GLASGOW,MANCHESTER,LIVERPOOL AND LONDON. I COME HOME TO WORK ON THIS BOOK PROPOSAL.IN 2 1/2 MONTHS I LEAVE FOR AN 8 WEEK TOUR OF AUSTRALIA. THEN DETROIT AND VIENNA AND GERMANY. SPAIN WANTS US BUT SO DOES SAN FRANCISCO AND TORONTO AND THEN GALLWAY, AND LONDON,EDINBURGH AND DUBLIN. AND WITH EACH CITY THE STORY CONTINUES AND EXPANDS. THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS ALWAYS RIGHT.

Well it's not quite memoir but you get the picture



# BITCH! DYKE! FAGHAG! WHORE!

**Penny Arcade bares body and soul in a psychological striptease that's putting analysts out of work. Kate Muir reports on the new stand-up confession**

**F**or the last 15 minutes of her one-woman show, *Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!*, Penny Arcade stands before her audience, clad only in a pair of black high heels. Her rounded, white, blatantly fortysomething body reeks not of sex, but of defiance. Arcade, stripped naked psychologically and physically by the end of her performance, does not give a damn. Neither, it seems, does the audience. For this is not theatre as burlesque – this is theatre as therapy.

Arcade is the undisputed leader of a new posse of performance artists who treat the stage as a public confessional. In Arcade's show, within

fact that she was raised by drag queens, how she has come to terms with her inner bitch and her early childhood: 'My mother was the Marlon Brando of Italian mothers,' she says.

The stage is just about big enough to contain her ego, and she holds her audience with a mix of raunchiness and stream of consciousness. Someone once described her show as 'like an all-day Italian family dinner'. They should have added, 'on speed'.

Arcade believes her show is therapeutic, not just personally, but for her audience, too. 'People come to my show and say that their therapist sent them.' Here, in the theatre of the seriously weird, Arcade strips off her black bra and red sequined dress because, she says, her

